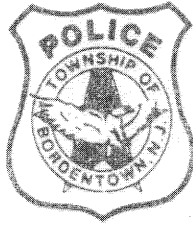


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Transient Crime

The arrival of warm weather brings increased numbers of transient criminals and their various scams and schemes to the MAGLOCLEN region. Targeting mostly the elderly population, these criminals trick them out of thousands of dollars with home repair scams and distraction burglaries. These thieves pose as repairmen from a local utility company or as home repair contractors to try to gain access to the homes.

There are many ways people can protect themselves from these transient criminals. It is most important to be aware of their schemes so that they are easily recognized. Listed below are some "do's and don'ts" and warning signs to help stay safe during these warm months.

BE AWARE, THE DO'S AND DON'TS

- Be aware of someone who tells you they have just found some money and wants to share it.
- Be aware of someone who wants to see your money just for a "little while," even when they tell you the money will be returned.
- Always be suspicious of someone who is going to give you a "reward" or "something for nothing."
- Beware of anyone calling on the telephone and asking personal questions about your banking procedures. Banks do not operate in this manner.
- Be suspicious about anyone urging you to make a withdrawal from your savings account. Neither the bank, nor any law enforcement officer, would ever ask you to take money from your bank.
- Be cautious of anyone proposing a "deal" that you must keep secret, or is urgent and requires your immediate action. If the "good deal" depends on you putting up your money immediately, then it is probably a bad deal. High pressure sales work because you are not allowed time "to think it over" and you do not have time for comparative shopping or consultation.
- Never, ever, discuss your finances with strangers.
- Never give personal or financial information to someone on the telephone unless you have verified who they are, and the reasons for their needing the information they seek.
- Be aware of anyone who professes to have a special ability to solve your particular problems.
- Be aware of a stranger who wants to bless your money or perform some secret ritual that will increase its value.
- Do not be embarrassed to report that you have been victimized, or have been approached by suspects attempting to con you.
- Never let anyone into your home without first verifying their identification and their purpose.
- Invite a neighbor or friend to be with you while strangers (salesmen, repairmen, etc.) are in your home.

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EARLY WARNING SIGNS OF SOME OF THE MORE COMMON SCHEMES

- Pigeon Drop* When someone tells you he or she has just found money and wants to share it.
- Bank Examiner* A telephone call from a "Bank Officer" checking on a dishonest employee and wanting your help.
- Impersonator* "Phony" police, gas company inspector, etc., "flashes" identification and wants to come into your home. Especially if they ask where you hide your valuables.
- Jamaican Switch* Foreign person who "flashes" a lot of money and is giving you money "for just helping."
- Home Improvement* Person appears at your door offering to spray your driveway or roof, fertilize the lawn, waterproof your basement, trim your trees, or other home improvement. The price will seem cheap, and the work will be done right away.
- Mail fraud* Fake contract that usually starts with the news that you have won something.
- Work at home scams* Newspaper or other ads claiming that you can earn money at home.
- Bait and Switch* You cannot find the advertised bargains and the salesman directs you to a higher priced item.

Source: The National Association of Bunco Investigators. Retrieved June 7, 2011, from <http://www.nabihq.org>.